



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, April 16, 2012

10:00 AM

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (12-1655)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Chair Patricia Curry, Vice Chair Geneva Berger, Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Helen A. Kleinberg, Commissioner Steven M. Olivas Esq., Commissioner Sandra Rudnick, Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW and Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell

Excused: Vice Chair Dr. Sunny Kang, Commissioner Dr. La-Doris McClaney, Commissioner Murray and Commissioner Dr. Harriette F. Williams

Call to order. (12-1297)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:09 a.m.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- 1.** Introductions of April 16, 2012, meeting attendees. (12-1298)

Self-introductions were made.

- 2.** Approval of the agenda for April 16, 2012. (12-1300)

On motion of Commissioner Rudnick, seconded by Commissioner Sorkin, unanimously carried (Commissioner Olivas being absent), this item was approved.

3. Approval of the minutes for the meeting of April 2, 2012. (12-1301)

On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner Rudnick, unanimously carried (Commissioner Olivas being absent), this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORTS

4. Chair's report by Patricia Curry, for April 16, 2012. (12-1302)

Chair Curry presented a verbal report on the following:

- **The Faith-Based Workgroup meeting, headed by Commissioner Kang, is scheduled for today at 12:00 p.m. in the Commission's Conference Room B-22, located at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration.**
- **Staff recently sent Commissioners the 2nd Quarter Calendar which includes meeting activities for the period of April through June; copies were also provided. Commissioners may contact staff if they want to list any other meetings participated in.**
- **The Division headed by Eric Marts, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), will host the "Connecting Families and Communities Resource Fair" on May 19, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Church of the Redeemer, 900 E. Rosecrans, Los Angeles 90059. Please contact staff if you are interested in attending the event. The event is designed to celebrate the grand opening of the "Connections" drop-in center which will provide resources and training to current and former transitional age foster youth and families.**
- **The Optimus Youth Homes and Family Services' 2012 "Walk 4 Youth Walk-A-Thon" is scheduled for May 20, 2012, at 6957 North Figueroa Street, Los Angeles 90042.**

Commissioner Sorkin added that the System Leadership Team meeting was rescheduled to April 25, 2012.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

5. DCFS Director's Report by Philip Browning, DCFS for April 16, 2012. (12-1303)

Director Browning presented a verbal report on the following:

- **The Chief Executive Officer is holding a press conference this afternoon regarding the County's Budget. The County is in good standing compared to other counties. Funding for the DCFS will be based on allocations from Federal and State monies.**
- **Director Browning was in Sacramento during the second week of April 2012 where he met with the Governor's office and State legislators. He updated them on DCFS and its statistics regarding the number of youth referrals received by DCFS for Calendar Year 2012 detailing Senate/Assembly Districts numbers.**
- **The California State Auditor's (Bureau of State Audits) Performance 2009-2010 did not reflect DCFS in a positive position in the Department's handling of children cases. According to the status report on child cases exceeding the required timeframe, statistics revealed that DCFS is in line with other states. The State indicates that completion of investigation of cases over 60 days is not acceptable. Although DCFS records show that even if a child case was over 60 days, the child was not at risk.**
- **AB 1440 (Perea) regarding child abuse and neglect reports. It is anticipated that this legislation will impact DCFS due to the proposed required reporting timelines to the State Department of Social Services on cases of child fatalities.**
- **DCFS is in the process of testing an iPhone "voice to text" concept. Using the "voice to text" concept will eliminate the typing of reports and reduce the time required to complete a case file. An issue with the voice recognition of the system that was identified and ISD is working the problem. Another undertaking of DCFS is streamlining the closure of case files; staff is working diligently to identify processes that are redundant and duplicative.**
- **State policy indicates a child should not be placed in a non-ASFA (Adoption and Safe Families Act) home. Child advocates and counsels do not share the same opinions on the state policy. This issue is currently being reviewed by the court and decision is forthcoming on best practices.**

The State Audit also calls for a full review and live scans of relatives before transferring youth to relative care; without these reviews, the State considers a placement unsafe. The DCFS' review in transferring youth to relative care placement includes background checks on relatives, a walk-through of the house by the Department, as well as interviews with relatives.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

III. DISCUSSION

- 6.** Discussion and recommendation to approve a letter to the Board of Supervisors requesting that they take a position and communicate with the County's State Advocate on which transitional housing programs would be best suited for Transitional Age Youth of Los Angeles County. (12-1640)

During discussion, at the suggestion and motion of Commissioner Biondi, seconded by Vice Chair Friedman, unanimously carried, the letter was approved with the following corrections:

Page 1, Paragraph 3, Sentence 1 was corrected to read, "The Commission feels that immediate input is crucial in order that the specifics of the THP+FC are not determined by the State without County input."

Page 2, Paragraph 1, was revised adding the following sentence to read, "The Commission respectfully requests that you keep us apprised of any action taken by your Board."

After discussion, on motion of Commissioner Biondi, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg, unanimously carried, the letter was approved with the following corrections noted above.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT REVISED](#)

IV. PRESENTATION

- 7.** Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Family Preservation Evaluation Presentation
- Peter J. Pecora, Ph.D., Managing Director of Research Services,
 - Todd Franke, Ph.D., UCLA School of Social Policy,
 - Jacquelyn McCroskey DSW, USC John Milner Professor of Child Welfare (12-1308)

Peter J. Pecora, Ph.D., Managing Director of Research Services, informed the Commission that it has been over five years since an in-depth evaluation of the Family Preservation Services (FPS) was conducted on the Program, its services, costs, and outcomes achieved by the various contractors. He distributed a handout outlining the evaluation and went over the following topics:

- **FPS Evaluation and Programs Examined**
- **Research Questions**
- **Persons Served by FPS**
- **Findings of FPS Outcomes**
- **Predictors of FPS Success**
- **Recommendations in moving forward with the Program**

Todd Franke, Ph.D., UCLA School of Social Policy, reported the following on the data collection method of the evaluation of FPS:

- **The data collected was provided by DCFS. The data range is between 2005 and 2010.**
- **A focal child from each family in the Family Maintenance and Family Reunification areas of the program, were identified and represent the data evaluated.**
- **The Structured Decision-Making measures of risk and safety across all of the agencies were taken into consideration.**

Jacquelyn McCroskey, DSW, USC John Milner Professor of Child Welfare, reported on the cost of FPS using the following components:

- **DCFS FPS**
- **Alternative Response Services**
- **Probation Preservation Services**
- **Up Front Assessment**

Ms. McCroskey stated that the total expenditures of FPS components for five fiscal years were \$160 million. The DCFS portion accounts for three-fourths of the total cost.

Dr. Franke reported on the outcomes of cases in the following areas and provided outcome data in the categories of re-referrals, new case openings and placements, and family reunifications:

- **Voluntary Family Maintenance**
- **Court-Ordered Family Maintenance**
- **Voluntary Family Reunification**
- **Court-Ordered Family Reunification**

Ms. McCroskey recognizes the huge difference in substantiated and unsubstantiated re-referrals and added that the difference is consistent across all areas and across the Country. The variance in numbers can be partly attributed to a large proportion of the calls received that are filtered out for inappropriateness.

Dr. Pecora added that the difference can also be a result of the contract agencies' variation of policies, practices, and skill set level which affects how abuse is reported.

Overall, the findings gathered were positive in comparison to Family Reunification and Family Preservation rates from other agencies within California and across the Country. A more detailed evaluation of the data may reveal the severity and nature of the substantiated cases and also provide opportunity to decrease the rate of substantiated cases.

Dr. Franke explained the data collected for Family Reunification showed significant increases in reunifications at the six, twelve, and twenty-four month timeframe after starting FPS.

Dr. Franke reported the following on the outcomes analyzed by category across five fiscal years for the period ranging from 2005 to 2010 for age categories ranging from birth to 17 years:

- **A rate decline for 15-year-olds across all categories which may be attributed to youth emancipating and "aging out" of the child welfare system.**

- **Voluntary Family Reunification** showed inconsistency due to a smaller sample of children being analyzed. The Court-Ordered Family Reunification analysis was conducted on approximately 4,000 children and showed a consistent and steady decline.
- Dr. Pecora added a study is being conducted in 11 counties and five states on family reunification which indicates that adolescents are the most challenging group for family reunification. The decline in reunification at age 15 is consistent with other counties and states.

Dr. Franke reported the following on factors that predict FPS youth outcomes for voluntary and court-ordered Family Maintenance:

Voluntary Family Maintenance:

- **High/Very High Risk Youth** (Higher risk youth is more likely to be re-referred, have substantiated re-referrals, and removals.)
- **Ethnicity** (Ethnicity was analyzed with Caucasians being the reference group. The analysis showed Hispanics are less likely to be re-referred.)
- **Household size** (A larger household size showed an increase in re referrals, substantiated re-referrals, and an increased likelihood for removal from the home.)
- **Gender** (Males are less likely to have a substantiated re-referral.)

Court Ordered Family Maintenance showed similar patterns as Voluntary Family Maintenance.

A survey conducted with DCFS workers on the perceptions of FPS contractors uncovered some areas that need improvement and showed a consensus of satisfaction with contract agency services.

Dr. Pecora concluded with the following recommendations:

- **Increase consistency of the referral process.**
- **Upgrade the FPS performance monitoring system to better manage the services and determine which are most effective.**

- **Implementation of a family assessment measure for all contract agencies that would ensure the agencies are assessing families in the same way and the provision of individualized services to meet family needs.**
- **Form an FPS learning network for contract agencies to share ideas and strategies to better work with families and improve the overall performance of the contractors.**
- **Incentivize FPS contractor program quality and fidelity by improving the way cost is reimbursed. This would incentivize the use of evidence-based practices and highly-trained staff with a specific skill set.**
- **Refine service cost measurement to help DCFS track the services being provided, giving families the maximum opportunity to improve.**

In response to questions posed by the Commission the following responses were given:

- **Ms. McCroskey stated that the data presented is for DCFS only. Additionally, the evaluation has initiated moving towards the direction of identifying key performance criteria.**
- **Dr. Franke clarified that the re-referrals are claims received through the call center or child abuse hotline on individuals either currently utilizing FPS or 12 months after services have been terminated. In some cases, the agency working with the families makes the referral.**

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)
 [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT REVISED](#)

V. WORKGROUP UPDATE

8. MHSA Children's Workgroup

- **Genevra Berger, Workgroup Chair (12-1591)**

Commissioner Kleinberg reported the following:

- **In November 2004, California voters approved Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), which became effective on January 1, 2005.**

Funds were made available through a 1% tax on California taxpayers whose taxable income exceeds \$1 million. Funds are to be used for MHSA purposes only. Counties are required to maintain their mental health budgets, regulated by the Department of Mental Health (DMH), and may not supplant existing funding with MHSA dollars.

Commissioner Sorkin reported the following:

- Most of the available funds are secured for adults and seniors. The Mental Health System Leadership Team (SLT) was able to secure less than 50% of the funds for children. The workgroup was able to secure 55% of Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funds for children.
- Funding for adults is being over spent and currently there is no mechanism in place for protecting PEI funds for children. There is concern that PEI funds will be used for the deficit in adult funds. In 2010, 650 Children age 12-18 required involuntary hospitalization, and the workgroup is advocating continuing this type of services for children.

Vice Chair Berger reported the following:

- Majority of the PEI funds collected for the past five years are unspent. The State has mandated prudent reserve for PEI dollars. DMH has not been successful in establishing a PEI program due mainly to difficulty in securing providers that are able to produce evidence-based services that are required by the State.
- The workgroup recommends increasing the oversight for contractors that are being allocated funding through conducting audits.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

9. TAY Mental Health Workgroup
- Susan F. Friedman, Workgroup Chair (12-1590)

Vice Chair Friedman reported the following:

- The Workgroup accomplished bringing awareness to DMH on the 16,000 to 20,000 probation youth in the community without any type of program services.

- A major concern of the Workgroup is that funds set aside for children's programs including TAY funding that was being spent on adult programs. The Workgroup began to take a closer look at the allocation of funds. DMH Chief Deputy Director Robin Kay, provided insight on the allocation of funding and explained DMH's challenges in looking at outcomes and the implementation of Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI).
- The Workgroup looked closer at transitional housing for youth with mental health issues and discovered that there currently is no mechanism for tracking youth that is turned away. The current contracts do not require contractors to furnish this information; however, the contracts are renewed every three years. The Workgroup would like to incorporate recommendations in the contract processes to enhance services.
- The Workgroup will be working with Chief Deputy Director Kay on the proposal of recommendations and report back at the next meeting.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

10. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (12-1304)

There were no matters posted.

Public Comment

11. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (12-1305)

No members of public addressed the Commission.

Announcements

12. Announcements for the meeting of April 16, 2012. (12-1306)

There were none.

Adjournment

13. Adjournment for the meeting of April 16, 2012. (12-1307)

The meeting adjourned by Chair Curry at 12:06 p.m.